



**Michael Shellenberger**  
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Dec 10 · 40 tweets · 19 min read



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# 1. TWITTER FILES, PART 4

## The Removal of Donald Trump: January 7

### As the pressure builds, Twitter executives build the case for a permanent ban

On Jan 7, senior Twitter execs:

- create justifications to ban Trump
- seek a change of policy for Trump alone, distinct from other political leaders
- express no concern for the free speech or democracy implications of a ban

This [#TwitterFiles](#) is reported with [@lwoodhouse](#)

For those catching up, please see:

Part 1, where [@mtaibbi](#) documents how senior Twitter executives violated their own policies to prevent the spread of accurate information about Hunter Biden’s laptop;

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If nothing shows, it may have been deleted  
[https://twitter.com/mtaibbi/status/1598822959866683394?s=20&t=I\\_UQztsVMazfJ5VvJSVR7A](https://twitter.com/mtaibbi/status/1598822959866683394?s=20&t=I_UQztsVMazfJ5VvJSVR7A)

Part 2, where [@bariweiss](#) shows how senior Twitter execs created secret blacklists to “de-amplify” disfavored Twitter users, not just specific tweets;

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[https://twitter.com/bariweiss/status/1601007575633305600?s=20&t=I\\_UQztsVMazfJ5VvJSVR7A](https://twitter.com/bariweiss/status/1601007575633305600?s=20&t=I_UQztsVMazfJ5VvJSVR7A)

And Part 3, where [@mtaibbi](#) documents how senior Twitter execs censored tweets by Trump in the run-up to the Nov 2020 election while regularly engaging with representatives of U.S. government law enforcement agencies.

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For years, Twitter had resisted calls to ban Trump.

“Blocking a world leader from Twitter,” it wrote in 2018, “would hide important info... [and] hamper necessary discussion around their words and actions.”

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<https://twitter.com/Policy/status/949399583842619392?s=20&t=gs43xOou4ZWmMl9Q3xD-lQ>

But after the events of Jan 6, the internal and external pressure on Twitter CEO [@jack](#) grows.

Former First Lady [@MichelleObama](#) , tech journalist [@karaswisher](#) , [@ADL](#) , high-tech VC [@ChrisSacca](#) , and many others, publicly call on Twitter to permanently ban Trump.



Chris Sacca

[@sacca](#)

Follow

You’ve got blood on your hands, [@jack](#) and Zuck. For four years you’ve rationalized this terror. Inciting violent treason is not a free speech exercise. If you work at those companies, it’s on you too. Shut it down.

12:46 PM · 6 Jan 2021

2,234 Retweets

10,056 Likes



242

2.2K

10K



bobbyg.eth

[@rsg](#) · 6 Jan 2021

Replying to [@sacca](#) [@jack](#)

Thank you for saying this. ❤️

2

35



Rick Zullo

[@Rick\\_Zullo](#) · 6 Jan 2021

Agreed

2



Deana

[@DeanaRM](#) · 6 Jan 2021

Replying to [@sacca](#) [@jack](#)

They haven't just rationalized it, they've monetized it.

1

17

397

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<https://threadreaderapp.com/thread/1601720455005511680.html>

2/10

Intelligencer

# It's Time for Social-Media Platforms to Permanently Ban Trump

By Kara Swisher



We have seen the Kraken, and it is Trump. Photo: Warner Bros. Pictures

Donald Trump finally unleashed the Kraken yesterday, although it had little to do with electoral fraud. Instead, it had everything to do with creating frightening chaos and swallowing up enemies whole, which is, for those who

Jonathan Greenblatt

@JGreenblattADL

Official

Two bare minimum tweets after the Capitol has been stormed by extremists is too little, too late. [.@jack](#), it's overdue to suspend [@realDonaldTrump](#) until his account stops promoting disinformation and inciting violence.

Donald J. Trump

@realDonaldTrump

33m

I am asking for everyone at the U.S. Capitol to remain peaceful. No violence! Remember, WE are the Party of Law & Order – respect the Law and our great men and women in Blue. Thank you!

159.6K

98.4K

236.4K

Donald J. Trump

@realDonaldTrump

1h

Please support our Capitol Police and Law Enforcement. They are truly on the side of our Country. Stay peaceful!

171.6K

95.3K

272.7K

Donald J. Trump

@realDonaldTrump

1h

Mike Pence didn't have the courage to do what should have been done to protect our Country and our Constitution, giving States a chance to certify a corrected set of facts, not the fraudulent or inaccurate ones which they were asked to previously certify. USA demands the truth!

171.6K

95.3K

272.7K

This claim about election fraud is disputed

ADL

@ADL

Jan 6, 2021

Official

ADL Statement on Violence at the U.S. Capitol Building: [adl.org/news/press-rel..](#)

## ADL Statement on Violence at U.S. Capitol Building

New York, NY, January 6, 2021 ... ADL (Anti-Defamation League) CEO Jonathan Greenblatt issued the following statement regarding today's violence at the U.S. Capitol Building in Washington, D.C.:

As ADL has said again and again, extremists must be taken at their word. First there was volatile rhetoric online, then explicit calls to violence and now people are acting on those calls in the nation's capital and flagrantly breaking the law. It must end now.

The President has promoted sedition and incited violence. People assaulting law enforcement officers or breaching government buildings must be arrested and held accountable.

More than anything, what is happening right now at the Capitol is a direct result of the fear and disinformation that has been spewed consistently from the Oval Office. President Trump has a responsibility to call for an end to this violence and unrest that he has sowed. His campaign of disinformation is a clear and present danger to our democracy.

But until such time as that happens, social media companies should suspend his accounts ASAP as they would do for anyone else advocating disinformation and promoting violence. It's time.

12:50 PM · Jan 6, 2021

177 Retweets

26 Quote Tweets

469 Likes

Dorsey was on vacation in French Polynesia the week of January 4-8, 2021. He phoned into meetings but also delegated much of the handling of the situation to senior execs [@yoyoel](#) , Twitter’s Global Head of Trust and Safety, and [@vijaya](#) Head of Legal, Policy, & Trust.

As context, it's important to understand that Twitter’s staff & senior execs were overwhelmingly progressive.

In 2018, 2020, and 2022, 96%, 98%, & 99% of Twitter staff's political donations went to Democrats.

[Unroll available on Thread Reader](#)

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<https://twitter.com/mtaibbi/status/1598829996264390656?s=20&t=CifNd2idctfKEAoZRDZTIQ>

In 2017, Roth tweeted that there were “ACTUAL NAZIS IN THE WHITE HOUSE.”

In April 2022, Roth told a colleague that his goal “is to drive change in the world,” which is why he decided not to become an academic.

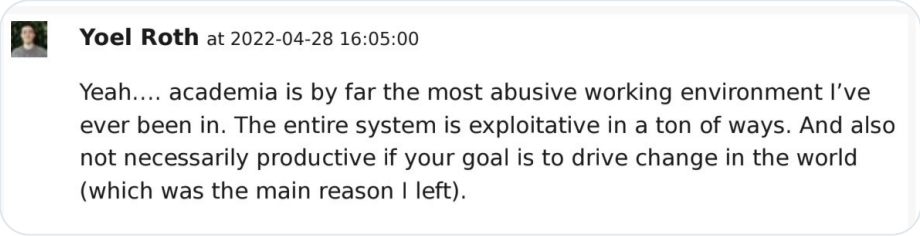
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https://threadreaderapp.com/thread/1601720455005511680.html

3/10



On January 7, [@jack](#) emails employees saying Twitter needs to remain consistent in its policies, including the right of users to return to Twitter after a temporary suspension

After, Roth reassures an employee that "people who care about this... aren't happy with where we are"

Around 11:30 am PT, Roth DMs his colleagues with news that he is excited to share.

“GUESS WHAT,” he writes. “Jack just approved repeat offender for civic integrity.”

The new approach would create a system where five violations ("strikes") would result in permanent suspension.

“Progress!” exclaims a member of Roth’s Trust and Safety Team.

The exchange between Roth and his colleagues makes clear that they had been pushing [@jack](#) for greater restrictions on the speech Twitter allows around elections.

The colleague wants to know if the decision means Trump can finally be banned. The person asks, "does the incitement to violence aspect change that calculus?"

Roth says it doesn't. "Trump continues to just have his one strike" (remaining).

Roth's colleague's query about "incitement to violence" heavily foreshadows what will happen the following day.

On January 8, Twitter announces a permanent ban on Trump due to the "risk of further incitement of violence."

On J8, Twitter says its ban is based on "specifically how [Trump's tweets] are being received & interpreted."

But in 2019, Twitter said it did "not attempt to determine all potential interpretations of the content or its intent."

[blog.twitter.com/en\\_us/topics/c...](https://blog.twitter.com/en_us/topics/c...)



**World Leaders on Twitter: principles & approach**  
An update on Tweets from world leaders  
[https://blog.twitter.com/en\\_us/topics/company/2019/worldleaders2019](https://blog.twitter.com/en_us/topics/company/2019/worldleaders2019)

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The *\*only\** serious concern we found expressed within Twitter over the implications for free speech and democracy of banning Trump came from a junior person in the organization. It was tucked away in a lower-level Slack channel known as “site-integrity-auto.”

"This might be an unpopular opinion but one off ad hoc decisions like this that don't appear rooted in policy are imho a slippery slope... This now appears to be a fiat by an online platform CEO with a global presence that can gatekeep speech for the entire world..."

Twitter employees use the term "one off" frequently in their Slack discussions. Its frequent use reveals significant employee discretion over when and whether to apply warning labels on tweets and "strikes" on users. Here are typical examples.

Recall from [#TwitterFiles2](#) by [@bariweiss](#) that, according to Twitter staff, "We control visibility quite a bit. And we control the amplification of your content quite a bit. And normal people do not know how much we do."

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[https://twitter.com/bariweiss/status/1601015872046260226?s=20&t=I\\_UQztsVMazfJ5VvJSVR7A](https://twitter.com/bariweiss/status/1601015872046260226?s=20&t=I_UQztsVMazfJ5VvJSVR7A)

Twitter employees recognize the difference between their own politics & Twitter's Terms of Service (TOS), but they also engage in complex interpretations of content in order to stamp out prohibited tweets, as a series of exchanges over the "[#stopthesteal](#)" hashtag reveal.

Roth immediately DMs a colleague to ask that they add "stopthesteal" & [QAnon conspiracy term] "kraken" to a blacklist of terms to be deamplified.

Roth's colleague objects that blacklisting "stopthesteal" risks "deamplifying counterspeech" that validates the election.

Indeed, notes Roth's colleague, "a quick search of top stop the steal tweets and they're counterspeech"

But they quickly come up with a solution: "deamplify accounts with stopthesteal in the name/profile" since "those are not affiliated with counterspeech"

But it turns out that even blacklisting "kraken" is less straightforward than they thought. That's because kraken, in addition to being a QAnon conspiracy theory based on the mythical Norwegian sea monster, is also the name of a cryptocurrency exchange, and was thus "allowlisted"

Employees struggle with whether to punish users who share screenshots of Trump's deleted J6 tweets

"we should bounce these tweets with a strike given the screen shot violates the policy"

"they are criticising Trump, so I am bit hesitant with applying strike to this user"

What if a user dislikes Trump \*and\* objects to Twitter's censorship? The tweet still gets deleted. But since the \*intention\* is not to deny the election result, no punishing strike is applied.

"if there are instances where the intent is unclear please feel free to raise"

Around noon, a confused senior executive in advertising sales sends a DM to Roth.

Sales exec: "jack says: 'we will permanently suspend [Trump] if our policies are violated after a 12 hour account lock'... what policies is jack talking about?"

Roth: "\*ANY\* policy violation"

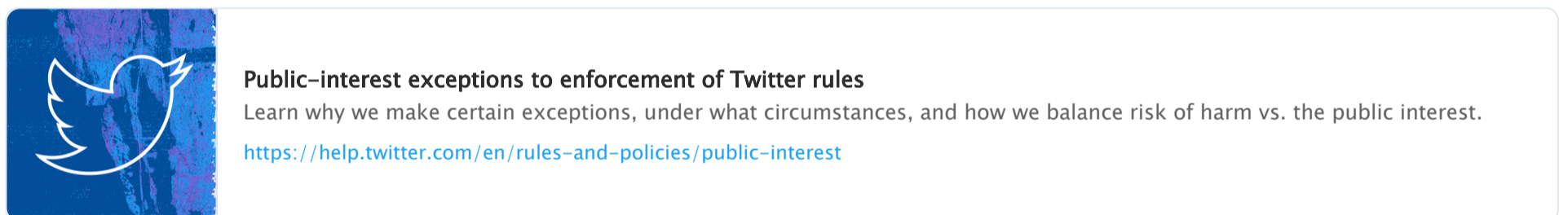
What happens next is essential to understanding how Twitter justified banning Trump.

Sales exec: "are we dropping the public interest [policy] now..."

Roth, six hours later: "In this specific case, we're changing our public interest approach for his account..."

The ad exec is referring to Twitter's policy of "Public-interest exceptions," which allows the content of elected officials, even if it violates Twitter rules, "if it directly contributes to understanding or discussion of a matter of public concern"

[help.twitter.com/en/rules-and-p...](https://help.twitter.com/en/rules-and-policies/public-interest)



Roth pushes for a permanent suspension of Rep. Matt Gaetz even though it "doesn't quite fit anywhere (duh)"

It's a kind of test case for the rationale for banning Trump.

"I'm trying to talk [Twitter's] safety [team] into... removal as a conspiracy that incites violence."

Around 2:30, comms execs DM Roth to say they don't want to make a big deal of the QAnon ban to the media because they fear "if we push this it looks we're trying to offer up something in place of the thing everyone wants," meaning a Trump ban.

That evening, a Twitter engineer DMs to Roth to say, "I feel a lot of debates around exceptions stem from the fact that Trump's account is not technically different from anybody else' and yet treated differently due to his personal status, without corresponding \_Twitter rules\_."

Roth's response hints at how Twitter would justify deviating from its longstanding policy. "To put a different spin

able to either adapt the product or the policy."

The evening of January 7, the same junior employee who expressed an "unpopular opinion" about "ad hoc decisions... that don't appear rooted in policy," speaks up one last time before the end of the day.

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Earlier that day, the employee wrote, "My concern is specifically surrounding the unarticulated logic of the decision by FB. That space fills with the idea (conspiracy theory?) that all... internet moguls... sit around like kings casually deciding what people can and cannot see."

The employee notes, later in the day, "And Will Oremus noticed the inconsistency too...," linking to an article for OneZero at Medium called, "Facebook Chucked Its Own Rulebook to Ban Trump."



**Facebook Chucked Its Own Rulebook to Ban Trump**  
The move is a reminder of social platforms' power over online speech—and the inconsistency with which they wield it  
<https://onezero.medium.com/facebook-chucked-its-own-rulebook-to-ban-trump-ecc036947f5d>

"The underlying problem," writes [@WillOremus](#) , is that “the dominant platforms have always been loath to own up to their subjectivity, because it highlights the extraordinary, unfettered power they wield over the global public square...

"... and places the responsibility for that power on their own shoulders... So they hide behind an ever-changing rulebook, alternately pointing to it when it's convenient and shoving it under the nearest rug when it isn't.”



**Facebook Chucked Its Own Rulebook to Ban Trump**  
The move is a reminder of social platforms' power over online speech—and the inconsistency with which they wield it  
<https://onezero.medium.com/facebook-chucked-its-own-rulebook-to-ban-trump-ecc036947f5d>

“Facebook’s suspension of Trump now puts Twitter in an awkward position. If Trump does indeed return to Twitter, the pressure on Twitter will ramp up to find a pretext on which to ban him as well.”

Indeed. And as [@bariweiss](#) will show tomorrow, that’s exactly what happened.

/END

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If nothing shows, it may have been deleted  
<https://twitter.com/bariweiss/status/1602364197194432515>


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**Matt Taibbi**  
[@mtaibbi](#)

Dec 2

1. Thread: THE TWITTER FILES

2. What you’re about to read is the first installment in a series, based upon thousands of internal documents obtained by sources at Twitter.

3. The “Twitter Files” tell an incredible story from inside one of the world’s largest and most influential social media platforms. It is a Frankensteinian tale of a human-built mechanism grown out the control of its designer.

Read 40 tweets



**Bari Weiss**  
[@bariweiss](#)


Dec 9

THREAD: THE TWITTER FILES PART TWO. TWITTER’S SECRET BLACKLISTS.

1. A new #TwitterFiles investigation reveals that teams of Twitter employees build blacklists, prevent disfavored tweets from trending, and actively limit the visibility of entire accounts or even trending topics—all in secret, without informing users.

2. Twitter once had a mission “to give everyone the power to

Read 31 tweets



**Matt Taibbi**  
[@mtaibbi](#)

Dec 9

1. THREAD: The Twitter Files THE REMOVAL OF DONALD TRUMP Part One: October 2020-January 6th

2. The world knows much of the story of what happened between riots at the Capitol on January 6th, and the removal of President Donald Trump from Twitter on January 8th...

3. We’ll show you what hasn’t been revealed: the erosion of standards within the company in months before J6, decisions by high-ranking executives to violate their own policies, and

Read 65 tweets



**Avid Halaby**  
[@AvidHalaby](#)

Dec 12

The stuff uncovered in the Twitter whistleblower report is much crazier than anything in the "Twitter files" but it's much less politically/tribally salient so it got no attention. Going to do a thread on some of the craziest things, in no particular order.

Twitter didn't monitor employee computers at all, it was not uncommon for employees to install spyware on work devices

Read 17 tweets

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@threadreaderapp unroll

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More from @ShellenbergerMD



**Michael Shellenberger**  
[@ShellenbergerMD](#)

Dec 6

FTX Crypto Fraudsters Targeted Poor Black Neighborhoods In PR-Lobbying Effort SBF's father, Stanford Professor Joseph Bankman, worked with FTX from the beginning Bankman oversaw intertwined philanthropic and regulatory efforts [michaelshellenberger.substack.com/p/ftx-crypto-f...](#)

In the spring of 2022, Sam Bankman-Fried, the founder of the bankrupt crypto exchange FTX, made Chicago its U.S. headquarters, drawing the applause of the city’s mayor.

“... ..”

Read 14 tweets




**Michael Shellenberger**  
[@ShellenbergerMD](#)

Dec 4

Covid Escaped From Lab As Part of U.S. Military Intel Operation, Says Former Senior Scientist For U.S. Government Contractor, EcoHealth [michaelshellenberger.substack.com/p/covid-escape...](#)

“Why on earth would the Chinese allow us into that laboratory?” asked Dr. Andrew Huff. “What they do need is our advanced biotechnology. And they need our training. And when I look at this, at the end of the day, this looks like an exchange of biotech for access to their lab.”

Read 9 tweets




**Michael Shellenberger**  
[@ShellenbergerMD](#)

Dec 1

Experts say people aren't at risk of being poisoned by open-air drug use, but a baby in an upscale San Francisco neighborhood park nearly died from fentanyl. The source remains unknown, but I discovered an open drug scene on the other side of the park. [michaelshellenberger.substack.com/p/baby-overdos...](#)

Multiple residents & people experiencing homelessness told me the baseball dugout & bleachers are an open drug scene. One homeless drug user showed me a large Ziploc bag of foil

Read 13 tweets




**Michael Shellenberger**  
[@ShellenbergerMD](#)

Nov 30

Signed and dedicated copies of both books now available as gifts! [michaelshellenberger.substack.com/p/store](#)

[amazon.com/Apocalypse-Nev...](#)

Read 6 tweets



**Michael Shellenberger**  
[@ShellenbergerMD](#)

Nov 30

Last year, Germany paid South Africa \$800 million to stop using coal. Since then, German imports of South African coal increased eight-fold. Now, Germany is producing more carbon emissions per unit of electricity than South Africa



**Michael Shellenberger**  
[@ShellenbergerMD](#)

Nov 29

Whew, good thing Europe doesn't have to rely on American deplorables to produce its natural gas! The Qataris, who are free of bigotry, have happily replaced the Russians. [twitter.com/i/web/status/1](#)

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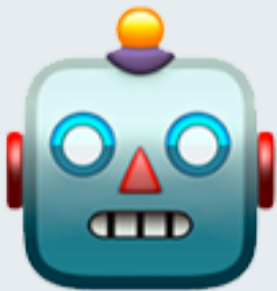
One of the worst forms of imperialism is rich nations taking raw materials from poor nations and leaving behind poverty rather than development. That’s precisely what Europe is doing with Africa in the name of climate change.

Read 14 tweets

Wind energy to the rescue!

ha ha jk

Read 5 tweets



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